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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

16 March 1949

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM NO. 141

SUBJECT: Brief Evaluation of Soviet Intentions

This memorandum is in answer to a specific request for an evaluation of recent Soviet moves toward Finland, Iran, Yugoslavia, and Greece.

1. Soviet troop movements on the Finnish border.

CIA has received no reliable or official reports indicating any significant increase in number or movement of Soviet troops along the Finnish border. The many rumors of such movements are believed to be deliberately inspired by the USSR as part of a war of nerves against the Scandinavian countries. This war of nerves has the twin goal of: (1) preventing Scandinavian participation in the Atlantic Pact, or at least lessening the effectiveness of such participation; and (2) intimidating border-line countries throughout the world who may wish to form closer ties with the West. It is unlikely that the USSR is preparing for armed intervention in Finland or the other Scandinavian countries.

2. Soviet attitude toward Iran.

Intensified Soviet pressure against Iran is expected as a result of the recent serious deterioration in relations between the two countries. Principal factors causing this deterioration have been: (1) the suppression of the pro-Soviet Tudeh Party in Iran; (2) far more belligerent anti-Soviet Iranian propaganda; (3) the shipment of US arms to Iran; and (4) public reference to the possibility of Iranian participation in a Mediterranean or Near Eastern pact. The USSR probably sees in these developments a further threat to its principal immediate aims in Iran: gaining control over Iranian oil and blocking closer military ties between Iran and the West. Increased Soviet pressure will probably not take the

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form of overt military intervention. Instead, the USSR will probably renew its demands that Iran maintain "friendly" relations with the USSR and build up Soviet troop concentrations on the Iranian border. The Soviet Union may also attempt to incite uprisings in Azerbaijan. In order to counteract such measures, Iran will probably inform the UN Security Council of the deterioration in Soviet-Iranian relations and press for a US denial of Soviet charges that Iran is being turned into an offensive base against the USSR.

3. Soviet troop movements toward Yugoslavia.

CIA discounts, on the basis of negative evidence at hand, the rumors which have been emanating from Eastern Europe concerning movements of Soviet troops toward the Yugoslav frontiers. Despite some signs of increased military activity in Hungary, Bulgaria, and Albania, there has been no indication that this activity is directed against Yugoslavia. The widespread circulation of these rumors and the increase of military activity are designed to create anxiety and uncertainty in Yugoslavia. They are also intended to encourage those pro-Communist elements in Yugoslavia which oppose Tito. In broader terms, the present campaign is a preliminary phase in a long-range program aimed at the ultimate overthrow of Tito. Satellite military activity has recently increased in Bulgaria, Hungary, and Albania, probably in preparation for imminent guerrilla action against Yugoslavia. Although this action will probably be on a small scale at the outset, its potential implications are explosive in the Balkan area.

4. Free Macedonia movement.

Increased emphasis on the Macedonian question in Soviet-inspired propaganda represents primarily a Kremlin attempt to exploit this issue as an additional weapon against Tito. The Kremlin may hope to undermine Tito's control over the Macedonians within Yugoslavia and to thwart Tito's deep-seated ambitions

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for a Macedonian state under Yugoslav control. The present Communist line suggests that the USSR is planning more positive pressure against Tito than the diplomatic and economic reprisals of the past six months. The re-opening of the Macedonian question is actually a part of the Kremlin's anti-Tito program which has recently become more actively hostile. CIA doubts, however, that such a program can be successful without resort to direct military action.

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Addition to Intelligence Memorandum 141.

At end of paragraph #3:

(Satellite military activity has recently increased in Bulgaria, Hungary, and Albania, probably in preparation for imminent guerrilla action against Yugoslavia. Although this action will probably be on a small scale at the outset, its potential implications are explosive in the Balkan area.)

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